



Region 6 REOC Update West Fertilizer Plant Explosion

US Environmental Protection Agency

Report as of 1100 CDT April 20, 2013

Overview: On April 17, 2013 a fire and explosion occurred at the West Fertilizer Company located in West, Texas. Local, state, and federal response personnel have responded to the incident. The U.S. EPA has mobilized personnel to the incident to conduct air monitoring activities upon request from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

The impact of the explosion has impacted an approximate ½ mile radius which includes 50 to 60 structures including residential homes, a nursing home, an apartment community and a middle school.

EPA Region 6 Field Activities

- 24-hour operations included mobile air monitoring for volatile organic compounds, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and lower explosive limit of methane gas. No air monitoring readings above background were detected.
- During the inspection of the stationary Air Monitor Equipment on Jerry Mashek Drive and West Spring St. DPS Officers reported that a fire near the grain silo flared up around 0400 and fire response was observed mobilizing to the Site. The fire was extinguished by fire department personnel.
- One EPA START contractor conducted air monitoring for volatile organic compounds, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and lower explosive limit of methane gas with a team of investigators from multiple agencies including ATF, CSB, OSHA, and EPA CID. The team assessed the property

inside the primary perimeter (surrounding and including the blast site) for safety and evidence collection in anticipation of property owners returning to assess their properties. No air monitoring readings above background were detected.

- At 1155, ASPECT conducted an over flight of the explosion site and potentially affected areas. The mission was to acquire aerial photography of the explosion site.
- EPA OSCS attended site briefings and law enforcement/operational briefings, conducted a meeting with CSB, TCEQ, and OSHA, and coordinated with ATF, CSB, TCEQ, OSHA, the 6th CST, the Office of the Texas State Chemist, and EPA CID on current and future site operations.
- EPA OSCs, Region 6 Risk Assessors, and START are drafting a draft QASP for assessment of the areas potentially affected by pesticides involved in the West Fertilizer, Inc. explosion.
- 4 EPA OSCs, 1 EPA PIO, 1 EPA CID agent, 1 EPA NCERT agent and 8 START contractors conducted 24-hour site operations, spaced over two shifts. The Regional MCP is on-site.
- EPA National Criminal Enforcement Response Team (NCERT) Agent Kurt Grunert has arrived on-scene and have been assisting response program personnel to facilitate entry and sampling discussions with the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).
- At the 0800 ATF law enforcement briefing, ATF indicated that the County planned to begin resident re-entry activities for residents located in the secondary exclusion zone approximately outside the ½ mile radius of the facility.
- EPA personnel surveyed potential soil sampling locations near the facility locations. City of West and McLennan County officials provided verbal access to the EPA OSCs to conduct soil sampling within the City and County right-of-ways and West Independent School District property. EPA will document verbal agreement via email and will follow up with signed access agreements.
- Casualty total is 14.
- Local animal control is collecting stray animals and providing housing, etc. Animals that are secured in homes or yards are being provided food and water until owners return.
- President Obama did sign a Federal Aid Programs for Emergency Declaration for Texas which includes Category B, emergency protective measures, including Direct Federal Assistance which is the work EPA normally conducts. The cost share is set at 75% Federal and 25% State.
- Importantly, the State of Texas has to either ask for specific assistance through FEMA, or FEMA can issue a mission assignment directly to EPA for work they need to have EPA conduct .
- This declaration also allows the State of Texas to receive reimbursement from FEMA for emergency protective measures they conduct at 75 %.
- As of 1700 last night, FEMA had returned their RRCC to normal operations.

Personnel	EPA OSC In Field	EPA RSC in Field	Contractor In Field	EPA In REOC	Contractor In REOC	Total
	4	3	8	*	*	15
Total	4	3	8	*	*	

*REOC operating in virtual mode this weekend